mighty fusion, one vast concentration of excellence, which, whilst it at once bewilders and perplexes, bears a testimony, aye, a living, breathing witness to a development of the powers of the human mind, which the sages of past centuries might have looked upon as fabulous, and which, even to the thinking mind of the present generation, is an almost inconceivable reality. The romance of antiquity is the realisation of the present, and these few words comprise the whole history of social progression. And yet how strange that with proofs of advance so simple there should still exist advocates of human retrogression. To advocate the latter is to reduce humanity almost to the level of the brute creation; it is to place the instinct of the brute on a par with the reason of man, inasmuch as whilst the one is stationary the other has undergone a continual recession and degradation, and seems (according to this theory) to promise an existence of hopeless idiocy to some future generation: such a theory is almost too absurd to be dwelt upon, yet something closely akin to this must surely be contended by the enlightened advocates of the inferiority of existing society to that of antiquity. We would refer such to the historian already quoted, and whose study of the byeways of the past has been so wonderfully shown in the reflection and depth of his writings. "Those," says the writer in question, "who compare the age on which their lot has fallen with a golden age which exists only in the imagination, may talk of degeneracy and decay, but no man who is informed as to the past will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present."

In treating of the seventh age of architecture, and which, from its peculiar features, we believe we may justly denominate the Utilitarian age, there is apparently but one plan to pursue. To notice individual examples will be totally unnecessary, and altogether at variance with an epoch whose spirit is peculiarly diffusive: it therefore remains only for us to compare its general features with those of the preceding eras, nor must we attempt to fix any precise period from which to date its rise, the transition was so gradual and imperceptible; for the erection of a mighty edifice, the due settlement of the foundation is of incalculable importance; without it the solidity of the structure is endangered, its permanence doubtful.

The grand distinctive feature of the seventh age is the extraordinary rise of cities with which it is marked. That great cities had previously existed is unquestionable; but it is equally unquestionable that the great cities of antiquity were units which, although exercising a vast influence on society, can barely be recognised as a distinctive feature in the history of social architecture. "Our age," it has been stated, "is pre-eminently that of great cities. Babylon, Thebes, Carthage, and Rome were great cities, but at no period has the earth been so covered with cities as at the present time, and never has society generally been so leavened with the spirit natural to them." And certainly at no period has there existed a corresponding association of those excellencies which are at once the highest attributes of the art. On every side we behold edifices destined for some grand, or noble, or useful end, and to which architecture has lent graces whose charms are doubly enhanced by utility. And as the truest ornamentation is that which is made subservient to utility, it consequently follows that an art of the nature of architecture is of the higher development, as the services it renders to mankind are increased and multiplied. The graces of Greek architecture existed only in her temples; in Rome we have marked an extension of the adaptation of the art to her palaces and public edifices; we have observed the fresh impulse received in the sixth age; but in the present age alone do we find its general diffusion over structures of every class and description. What an impression is to be conveyed to the thinking mind by the edifices surrounding us; their name is legion, their ends the same. Religion, education, arts, sciences, manufactures, and charity are alike represented, at every moment break on our view, and mark the architecture of the day with a character which belongs to no other period. And yet how strange to hear it repeated at all times that our age is peculiarly deficient in any distinctive feature of the art! Is it possible that those in whose mouths the assertion is constant, can have thought for a moment on the mighty and glorious institutions which surround them, upon the noble development of the intellect of man which is everywhere visible, upon the vastness of our commercial institutions, and the splendid benevolence of our charities, each moulded as it were in stone? Is it possible to be cognisant of these, and yet to assert that our age is wanting in architectural character? Such an assertion must surely be regarded as a palpable denial of facts, and which a moment's reflection must refute. Our age, it cannot be denied, has witnessed to an unprecedented extent the application of the principles of architecture to those ends which are the best calculated to serve and advance the interests of humanity, and to increase its moral and physical well-being; and if, as we assume, an art reaches its highest standard only in proportion as it tends to the amelioration and elevation of the condition of mankind (and which we feel confidently assured is the highest merit to which any art can pretend), then do we claim for the architecture of our day, precedence over that of all past ages in which its application was more partial, its limits more narrow and confined.

We have now arrived at the conclusion, but not, we trust, without having made evident to at least some of our readers the fallacy of the remark, that our architecture can claim no distinctive attribute, whereby posterity shall class it, a remark which we rather suspect arises from that want of comprehensiveness of general principles, which, whilst it can discern and distinguish the spot of sunshine and of shadow, is totally incapable of rising to the recognition of that grand breadth of light and shade, which is the surest mark of extended genius, and widely developed mental power.

We trust that throughout we have made evident the gradual and progressive development of the condition of society, contemporary with an advanced condition of architecture, that we have read aright the lesson taught us by its impressive records which speak to us so truthfully of the bygone, and which evidence so plainly the present. There are thoughts equally sublime, aye, and grander and nobler, and impressions as deep to be conveyed in dwelling upon the living structures of the present as upon the ruined monuments of the past. The past is beyond recal, the present is ours to improve; we can gaze earnestly and hopefully upon the bright dreams of the future. It is a far nobler philosophy which looks forward to the perfection of our species than the mean, narrow doctrine of man's moral degradation; to encourage the latter is to silence the better promptings of our nature; the glorious spirit of the former is the surest incentive to moral purity; the spirit which makes our bosoms yearn with nobler aspirations and with loftier feelings.

W. M. Bucknall.

ON THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE ROMAN FORUM AND THE CLIVUS CAPITOLINUS, AND THE NOMENCLATURE OF TEMPLES THEREON.*

It will be remembered that at the ordinary general meeting of the Institute on the evening of the 31st May just past, some extracts were read from a letter addressed by one of our fellows to one of our vice-presidents, in which it was stated that a good deal was going on at Rome to interest the architect and the archæologist.† The author of that letter, Mr. Tite, whom we are all glad to see again amongst us in restored health and vigour, has been surveying with the eye of a man of taste that interesting "field in which a thousand years of silenced factions sleep," *The Roman Forum*: he has given us a sketch of the indiscriminate slaughter made by the *Republic* of 1848, on that sacred ground, which equally exerted its short-lived energy in pulling down the houses which obstructed the view, and uprooting the trees which graced the classical landscape. The only satisfaction we have is, that, as on the Boulevards of Paris, so along the margin of the Via Sacra, the trees may grow again before the next revolution, while the houses which obstructed the view and concealed the ancient topography are gone for ever. Upon the whole, therefore, the future student and antiquary may be indebted to the Republic for a better view of the Palatine Hill, where despotism had its seat, and clearer conceptions of the limits of the Forum, where liberty luxuriated into license. Our learned friend and fellow observer, that the foundations of the Basilica Julia are cleared out, and the ascent of the Via Sacra to the Capitol is quite distinct. He adds, that the result of all these excavations certainly tends to clear away all doubts and difficulties as to the Forum of the emperors, the Forum as it was from the time of Julius Cæsar. These observations of our learned colleague have induced me to take up a subject which some may consider to be worn out,—"The Topography of the Roman Forum;" but I flatter myself that at an Institute of Architects anything that tends to illustrate that classical ground, and the models of architecture which once stood upon it, and whose remains still exist, can never be unacceptable. The object I have in view in this paper, is to assign to what Mr. Tite calls the Forum of the Emperors its proper limits and dimensions, which have so long been a matter of antiquarian controversy,—not that I presume to set that controversy at rest, but I mean to offer such proofs from the present state of the ground and ancient authorities and other monuments, as appear to me to assign the proper limits: you will still have to judge for yourselves whether these proofs be satisfactory or not. For the sake of perspicuity and rendering the subject more accessible to your attention, I lay down the order in which I propose to treat this question. I shall first glance at the various opinions of antiquaries, and the commonly received opinions up to the period of the modern excavations as to the limits of the Forum; but inasmuch as the question of limits is materially affected by the adjacent places, and especially by the Clivus Capitolinus, I shall have to examine the names and positions of the three temples whose remains still exist upon it, and then bring the argument to bear upon the limits of the Forum, with special reference to the discovered basement of the Basilica Julia.

I do not mean, by referring you to the various opinions of antiquaries, to bring up those opinions for the sake of refuting them, but simply to state what they are, for the purpose of showing the few points in which they agree, for this will be so much gained towards the object I have in view. They all agree, for instance, from Camucci in 1500, to Professors Fea and Nibby in 1840, that one angle of the Roman Forum was at the Mamertine Prison, which now exists beneath the Church of St. Joseph, near the Arch of Septimius Severus. Marliano, one of the earliest of antiquarian writers who deserves attention, considered the Forum to be 100 paces in length, extending from the Arch of Severus to the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina; and betook the width of fifty paces across to the north angle of the Palatine Hill, including the three celebrated columns now standing: he even prolonged it, but by another name, as far as the Arch of Titus. Donatus, the Jesuit, showed this to be an error, from the authorities of Dionysius and Livy, who describe the Forum as occupying the space between the Palatine and Capitoline Hills; and so completely has this portion of the argument prevailed, that a second angle of the Forum, with the consent of all, has been fixed near the Temple of Antoninus, in a line with the Arch of Septimius Severus, and where the Arch of Fabius, who conquered the Allobroges, once stood: the question of limits was then reduced to this,—whether did these two angular points, upon which all were agreed, define the length or the width of the Forum. Until Nardini came, all unanimously said the length: since the time of Nardini, by far the majority of an opposite

* Read at the ordinary meeting of the Institute of Architects, June 28.

† See p. 293, ante.

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